(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to launch an unmanned spaceship to moon;

(b) if so, the purpose and the cost involved in this venture; and

(c) what is the urgency for such a venture when a lot of developmental activities are held up for want of funds and what public interest and removal of poverty are going to be served by such a venture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) In consonance with the mandate of Indian Space Research Organisation for research in space sciences and based on the interest of the scientific community, an unmanned spacecraft mission around moon has been planned.

(b) The main purpose of the mission is to study the hitherto unexplored aspects of the moon and to expand the horizon of our scientific knowledge and also to upgrade our technological capability. The cost of the mission is presently estimated to be Rs. 386.00 crores.

(c) Such a deep space mission would throw-up challenges to our vision and scientific knowledge and upgrade our technological capabilities. Moon can be the outpost for further planetary exploration. The technological up-gradation involved in this mission would provide several spin-offs in the areas of mineral prospecting, power generation, communication systems, etc.

Launch of PSLV

2696. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) by when the PSLV (C-5) is likely to be launched;

(b) whether the burning of cables near the launch pad in a fire is likely to affect the launching; and

(c) what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) The PSLV (C-5) mission is planned to be launched during October, 2003 and will carry the 1360 kg. IRS-P6 (RESOURCE SAT-I) satellite.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Data cables are laid in a concrete trench connecting the launch complex with various facilities located in Satish Dhawan Space Centre

SHAR. The fire broke out in one of the cable wells located near the launch complex on 1st July, 2003. The fire was immediately put off and the damaged cables have been replaced and tested.

Delay in implementation of projects

2697. DR. A. R. KIDWAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether delay in implementation of various projects of twelve Ministries has resulted in cost overrun totalling to over Rs. 15,155 crores;

(b) if so, which are the Ministries that have been delaying these projects;

(c) the main reasons for the same;

(d) to what extent the cost escalation has been made in these Ministry projects; and

(e) what action Government propose to take against these Ministries where this cost overrun projects has been increasing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION :(SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) to (d) As on 1.07.2003,264 projects costing Rs. 100 crore and above belonging to 13 Ministries, on the monitor of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, had registered an overall cost overrun of Rs. 15,050.15 crore with reference to the latest approved cost of Rs. 1,84,855.59 crore. Fund constraints, delay in land acquisition, change in scope of projects, delay in award of contracts and slow progress by contractors are the main reasons for the slippages in date of commissioning of projects. The cost escalation of projects, sector-wise under the Administrative control of various Ministries are given in the Statement enclosed.

(e) The steps taken by the Government to improve project implementation include:

(i) adoption of two-stage clearance system and stricter appraisal of project reports before investment approval;

(ii) taking up of projects for implementation only after funds have been fully tied up;

(iii) in-depth review of projects on monthly as well as quarterly basis by the Government;

(iv) setting up of an Empowered Committee in the administrative Ministries for review of departmentally executed projects;